

Message Text

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UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 3315

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SW
SUBJ: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT UP

1. WHILE OVERALL UNEMPLOYMENT IN SWEDEN CONTINUES TO HOVER SLIGHTLY ABOVE 2 PERCENT (2.2 PERCENT IN JULY) THE PROBLEM OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, PARTICULARLY IN THE 16-19 YEAR-OLD BRACKET, AND MOST PARTICULARLY AMONG IMMIGRANT YOUTH HAS WORSENERED. UNEMPLOYMENT FOR 16-19 YEAR-OLDS WAS 7.6 DURING THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1978. UNEMPLOYMENT FOR IMMIGRANT YOUTH IN THE SAME AGE BRACKET WAS 14 PERCENT, OR ALMOST DOUBLE THE RATE FOR SWEDISH YOUTH.

2. CERTAIN NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE STOCKHOLM AREA, WHICH HAVE LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF IMMIGRANTS, HAD 16-19 YEAR-OLD UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OF 30 OR 40 PERCENT, AND ONE NEIGHBORHOOD IS REPORTED TO HAVE HAD 61 PERCENT OF ITS TEENAGERS UNEMPLOYED.

COMMENT: WHILE SOME OF THE ABOVE STATISTICS MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY SAMPLE SIZE AND OTHER FACTORS, THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR. SWEDEN IS HAVING SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES IN EMPLOYING ITS YOUTH AND APPEARS TO HAVE DEVELOPED A TWO TIER LABOR MARKET,
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WITH NATIVE SWEDES FARING SUBSTANTIALLY BETTER THAN THE OFTEN DARKER, MORE POORLY EDUCATED, NON-SWEDISH SPEAKING IMMIGRANT POPULATION. IRONICALLY, SWEDEN'S SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM AND ITS ACTIVE LABOR MARKET POLICY BOTH INTENSIFY THE EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS OF THE YOUNG AND THE IMMIGRANT. EMPLOYERS ARE REQUIRED TO ALLOW NON-SWEDISH SPEAKERS TO RECEIVE 240 HOURS OF SWEDISH LANGUAGE TRAINING ON COMPANY TIME, MAKING MEDIUM AND SMALL

EMPLOYERS VERY RELUCTANT TO HIRE A NON-NATIVE. DURING THE
DIFFICULT YEARS OF 1976-78 SWEDEN'S ACTIVE LABOR MARKET POLICY
HAS CONCENTRATED MUCH EFFORT ON PREVENTING LAY-OFFS AND GIVING
EMPLOYERS FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO KEEP REDUNDANT WORKERS
ON. WHILE THIS HAS BEEN MOST HELPFUL TO ALREADY EMPLOYED
WORKERS, IT HAS ACTED TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF JOB OPENINGS
FOR NEW WORKERS JUST ENTERING THE LABOR MARKET, AND HAS TENDED
TO CONCENTRATE UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG THE YOUNG, WHO HAVE NEVER
HELD JOBS.

KENNEDY-MINOTT

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